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ABSTRACT

This project evaluated three modules, which were developed to meet key basic training requirements common to part-time workers in different branches of community education (adult education, community development, and youth work). Draft modules were sent to about 40 individuals or organizations in the field for comment on their structure and relevance. Each module was piloted at two different sites in urban, rural, or intermediate areas in Scotland. To assess the suitability of the modules for training in community education, researchers interviewed a sample of the participants and all of the trainers. Overall, trainers were very satisfied and regarded the modules as effective. Modules were perceived as flexible in terms of form, content, adaptability to a variety of local contexts, and needs of individuals with different educational experiences. Trainees named as positive features of the modules the range of teaching methods used, courses relevant to perceived needs, opportunities to practice skills needed for their jobs, and opportunities to meet with other part-timers. Respondents mentioned these drawbacks and problems: lack of challenge, irrelevance, duplication, and venue. (Four references are cited. Interview schedules are appended.) (YLB)

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An Evaluation of Training Modules for Part-Time Workers in Community Education

Celine Castelino Pamela Munn

This report is one of a series focusing on training for part-time workers in community education. It evaluates the effectiveness of three basic training National Certificate modules written specifically for the workers in question. Trainers and participants were interviewed about their perceptions of the relevance, flexibility and suitability of these modules. We also report views on assessment and accreditation. The report begins with a summary of main findings and some key questions for those who provide training.

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Preface

This report forms the third and final part of a project commissioned by the Scottish Education Department (SED) in 1987 to investigate the training needs of part-time community education workers. The study, undertaken in collaboration with the Scottish Community Education Council (SCEC), included research, development and evaluation. The first strand of the project involved researching the views of part-time staff, their employers and trainers on training needs and on how adequately these needs were being met. It also included a survey of national training provision. The second strand concerned the development of three training modules, based on identified needs. The third strand (the work reported here) consisted of an evaluation of these modules.

The evaluation would not have been possible without the help and support of many people. We are very grateful to all those involved in piloting the modules who shared their experiences with us and spared time to be interviewed. The report has had the benefit of the constructive criticism of the research project's advisory committee and of Lyn Tett at SCEC and Fiona O'Kane, the project's development officer, with whom we collaborated in this research. We gratefully acknowledge their support and encouragement. Finally, our thanks go to Anne Beer who typed successive drafts quickly and accurately.

Despite all these contributions to the work we should make it clear that sins of omission or of commission rest with the authors. The views reported here are not necessarily those of either the SED or of the Scottish Council for Research in Education.

Celine Castelino
Pamela Munn

March 1990

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

A brief summary is provided as a handy reference tool and as a guide to the main body of the report. Details of the research design methods are contained in Chapter 1.

Flexibility	Modular training was perceived to be flexible in terms of form, content and training provision.	*Chapter 2*
Relevance	The pilot modules addressed perceived training needs and were pitched at the right level for trainees.	*Chapters 2 & 3*
Teaching Methods	Descriptors suggested the use of participative teaching methods which were preferred by trainees and trainers.	*Chapters 2 & 3*
Negotiation	Modules allow scope for negotiation within the limits of the learning outcomes.	*Chapter 2*
Time	Planning modular courses need not take more time than preparing other forms of training. Extra time may be required to prepare performance criteria and instruments of assessment.	*Chapter 2*
	Trainees did not consider the time spent on preparing assignments outside class contact hours as a problem.	*Chapter 3*
On-the-job Training	The modules encourage on-the-job training through practical projects carried out in the workplace.	*Chapter 3*
On-the-job Support	The modules encourage on-the-job support by involving full-time staff in the planning and assessment of work-based projects.	*Chapter 3*
Multi-agency Training	Multi-agency training offers many advantages but entails extra planning and administration.	*Chapters 3 & 4*
Support Networks	The modules encourage the development of support networks directly through project work and through bringing together workers with common interests.	*Chapters 2 & 3*
Critical Assessment of Practice	Project work, self-assessment and evaluation, in particular, encouraged trainees to assess their practice critically and developed self-awareness.	*Chapter 3*
Assessment	Trainees welcomed assessment and found it challenging.	*Chapter 3*
	Some trainers lacked confidence in their assessments.	*Chapter 2*
Effectiveness	Overall, all those involved were satisfied with the training modules and thought that the approach was appropriate for community education training.	*Chapters 2 & 3*

Status of Modules	Trainees were concerned about the status of the National Certificate and its potential for enhancing employment opportunities or access to other qualifications.	*Chapter 3*
Compulsory Training	Blanket training should be based on expressed needs. It could deter individuals from seeking employment in community education.	*Chapters 3 & 4*

TEN QUESTIONS FOR POLICY MAKERS

While we are aware that training provision is largely dependent on the available budget, we thought it was worth drawing the attention of those responsible for framing training policy to the questions below. We should also say that the questions refer to training issues in general and are not confined to the evaluation of the modules.

1. Is there an explicit staff development policy for
   i) part-time staff?
   ii) trainers?

2. How are trainers recruited? What criteria are used? Given the importance of recent relevant experience to trainees, is this a factor that influences their selection?

3. How are part-time workers recruited? Do induction procedures provide opportunities to get a taste of community education work? Can new recruits drop out without losing face.

4. Is guidance readily available for part-time workers on their career prospects within community education? At a minimal level, are current vacancies drawn to part-time staff's attention?

5. Is training currently accredited? If so, what is its status?

6. Are standards set and are they comparable to standards in other parts of the country?

7. Is the effectiveness of training currently assessed?

8. Does current training include on-the-job training and assessment? Is regular, structured support built into on-the-job training?

9. Should training for all part-time workers be compulsory? If so, would it deter some individuals from becoming involved in the community education service?

10. Is there co-operation between different agencies to deliver training to part-timers working for different organisations? Would community education organisations benefit from this form of training?

1

Introduction

Background

Part-time staff represent a large proportion of the community education workforce and are essential to both the voluntary and local authority sectors. Exact figures for the size of this workforce have been difficult to obtain but our earlier research indicated that there are over 50,000 volunteers within youth organisations, more than 20,000 paid or voluntary part-time staff in the community education services and 4,000 paid and volunteer tutors in adult basic education. In view of the important contribution part-time staff make to the service it seems surprising that there is relatively little information available about their training needs and the adequacy of current provision. A two-year research project was therefore commissioned by the Scottish Education Department (SED) to address these questions and consider the possibility of systematising training through the use of National Certificate modules. The research had three main strands:

1. An interview study in three contrasting case-study areas investigating the perceptions of part-time workers, their trainers and employers of their training needs and their views on current provision. In addition, a postal survey of national provision was undertaken.
2. The development of a small number of modules based on the expressed needs of the respondents.
3. The evaluation of the modules.

Our initial research, published in three reports focusing on the training needs of part-time workers in youth work, adult education and community development respectively, showed that training provision is fragmentary and varies in quality. In order to begin to address the need for a systemised and standardised approach to training, three modules were developed. These modules, discussed in more detail below, are intended to meet key basic training requirements identified by the initial research which are common to part-time workers in different branches of community education. In addition, a number of other pressing training needs were identified which we hope will be catered for by module development groups.

This report concentrates on evaluating the three modules produced by the project's development officer. The perceived characteristics of good quality training identified by our informants formed the basis of the evaluation criteria used to assess the effectiveness of the

modules. Before describing these we have to say a word about the decision to develop modules rather than other approaches to training.

Why was a modular form chosen?

The need for a coherent national policy on training in community education has been emphasised in a series of reports on the service. For example, Training for Change (1984), a report by the Training Committee set up by the Scottish Community Education Council (SCEC), which focused specifically on training needs and provision, considered a number of approaches to training and strongly recommended the adoption of modular training. These modules had been introduced in colleges of further education and were beginning to be used in other branches of education. The Committee favoured the modular approach because it offers flexibility at a number of levels, increases access to education and training, is adaptable to local and changing circumstances and can provide a cumulative record of training credits.

Although few of our respondents had experienced modules they were attracted to the idea of modular training for the reasons outlined above. In particular they welcomed the possibility of gaining nationally recognised qualifications. In addition, modules provide wider access to training, are intended to be student-centred and offer scope for gaining practical experience through on-the-job training. Some trainers, however, were not convinced about the suitability of the modular approach or the need for standardised training and certification for part-time workers in community education. We return to this in Chapter 4.

Which modules were developed?

On the basis of key training requirements identified above, the project's development officer developed three new modules which were:

- to be generic, reflecting the diversity of groups who would undertake them;
- to be adaptable to the context in which the participants operated;
- to cater for a number of contrasting needs.

The three modules selected for development and piloting were:
Community Work Induction (induction), Introduction to Working with Groups (group work) and Youth Work I (youth work).

The first of these is intended to fulfil the induction needs of new staff identified by the earlier research and may be used by a range of organisations. It covers the structure and aims of the organisation, job remit, conditions of service, working practices and principles, support and supervision procedures, and available resources.

All categories of community education workers placed the development of group work skills high on their list of basic training requirements. The second module, therefore, was written to provide them with a basic understanding of different types and functions of groups, and of the skills and methods for setting up, planning and running programmes for groups.

The third module was written for the largest category of part-time worker, the youth worker, but would also benefit the generic community worker who would inevitably have some contact with youth groups. It introduces the trainee to the aims, objectives and development of youth work, develops contact and basic relationship building skills, and explores methods of obtaining resources.

How were the modules evaluated?

Before describing our research methods, it is necessary to discuss the criteria on which the evaluation was based. These were informed by the kinds of training needs and perceptions of the features of effective training which were identified by our case-study findings and were operationalised into a series of structured interview questions. While there is some overlap, they may be grouped into features which were particularly important to part-time workers, to trainers and those which were important to both:

Features important to part-time staff

- relevance to perceived needs
- not requiring too much of the participants' own time
- encouragement of on-the-job support

Features important to trainers/employers

- adaptability to different organisations
- encouragement of critical assessment of practice
- offering opportunities for local involvement

Features important to both

- opportunities to practice work-related skills
- use of directly participative teaching methods such as group discussion, role-play
- promotion of flexibility in training provision

In addition we wanted to find out whether those participating in the pilot regarded modular training as a suitable approach to training for community education workers. As we mentioned earlier, few of our respondents in the earlier phase of the research had had direct experience of modules and were therefore, responding to the idea of modules. The pilot, on the other hand offered the opportunity to comment on the suitability of this approach based on direct experience of modules written specifically for community education workers.

Evaluation methodology

Selection of pilot sites

Draft modules were sent out to about 40 individuals or organisations in the field for comment on their structure and relevance. The interest generated by the process of consultation facilitated the identification of suitable sites for piloting the modules. Local authority staff were more readily able to respond within the timescale of the project and several regions were represented at a training seminar at which the piloting and evaluation of the modules was discussed and planned. Six sites were selected, two for each module. Details of the sites and participants are provided in Tables 1.1 and 1.2.

Each module was to be piloted at two different sites in urban, rural or intermediate areas, and was to include as wide a range of workers as possible. Participation in the pilot was voluntary and dependent on whether the modules could be delivered within the timetable of the project. The forms the modular programmes took and the recruitment of trainees were the responsibility of the participating organisations. Table 1.1 lists the participating organisations, the modules being piloted and the forms they took.

Table 1.1: Modules and participant organisations

Module Name	Sites	Form
Community Work Induction	Borders Regional Council	2 full days over one month*
	Lanark Division, Strathclyde Regional Council	3 Sundays over 5 months
Introduction to Working with Groups	Women & Health Tutors, Lothian Regional Council	6 evenings over 4 months
	Castlebrae Community Education Office, Lothian Regional Council	**
Youth Work 1	West Lothian College	1 afternoon per week over 2 college terms
	Grampian Regional Council	4 Sundays and 3 evenings over 5 months

* Compulsory training for part-time community education assistants

** This course did not take place on schedule as explained below

Modules in four of the sites were planned by community education trainers, two of these, an induction and a youth work module, were open to staff from voluntary organisations. The fifth pilot was planned by an inter-agency group concerned with women's health, and the sixth was undertaken by full-time students on a health and community studies course at a college of further

education. Further details about the modules may be obtained from the resource pack prepared by the development officer. Unfortunately, one of the group work module pilots had to be postponed at the last moment because two of the tutors fell ill and the organisations involved were unable to arrange alternative dates within the timetable of the project because of conflicting demands on the part-time workers time. However, we did interview the overall trainer whose comments are included in Chapter 2.

Participants were engaged in several different community education activities and worked for a variety of organisations and local authority departments. Table 1.2 gives details of the participants' community education work.

Table 1.2: Participants' community education occupations

Module	Category of Worker	Trainer
Community Work Induction	Community Education Assistants (based at community centres and engaged in a range of activities) Information Workers (responsible for producing newsletters and answering general enquiries)	Community Education Officer Community Worker
Lanark Division	Youth Workers Members of Community Centre Committee Women's Aid volunteer Voluntary Care Organisation worker	Community Education Officer
Group Work		
Lothian Region	Health Visitors Women's Group workers NALGO Representative Bangladeshi Women's Centre workers Women Unlimited worker Adult Education Tutors Craigmillar Children's Project	Freelance trainer with community education experience
Castlebrae Community Education Office	Craigmillar Festival Society workers Youth Workers Save the Children Fund workers	Community Education Worker Youth Worker
Youth Work I		
Lothian Region	Full-time students	Lecturer with community education experience
Grampian Region	Paid and Volunteer Youth Workers	Senior Community Education Worker Specialist Trainers

Interviews and Observation

To assess the suitability of modules as a vehicle for training in Community Education we interviewed a sample of the participants and all the trainers. Approximately half the participants in each group were interviewed and were selected to represent a range of experience. It was not possible to include equal numbers of men and women as most of the participants were female. Prior to interviewing the participants, a small amount of observation was carried out by the researcher to sensitise her to the training situations, enable her to interview the participants on the basis of a degree of shared experience and to provide an extra dimension to the evaluation.

A total of 35 interviews were held. Table 1.3 gives details of these. The interviews, which took from 45 minutes to an hour on average, were structured on the basis of the important features of good quality training identified by the case-study research. In addition a number of questions about modular training were included. These were also based on our earlier work. Copies of the schedules are included as appendices. The structured nature of the interview allowed us to record answers on the interview schedule. However, a tape-recorder was also used whenever possible to allow the respondents to discuss related issues at greater length without the researcher having to take too detailed notes.

Table 1.3: Numbers interviewed

Module	Number of Trainees	Number of Interviewees		Total	Trainees
		M	F		
Community Work Induction	24	2	10	12	3
Group Work	11		5	5	2
Youth Work I	20	4	6	10	3
Total	55	6	21	27	8

We are thus able to write with confidence about the views of all the trainers who developed and delivered training programmes based on the module descriptors, and about half the part-time workers who experienced the training. Overall satisfaction was expressed with the modules by the trainers, as reported more fully in Chapter 2, and with the training programmes by the trainees as described in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 sums up our findings and considers their implications.

2

Trainers' Views

In this chapter we report the views of the trainers on the experiences they gained, the lessons they learned and the problems they encountered when piloting the National Certificate modules. We have divided the chapter into two sections. The first briefly describes how the trainers approached the modules and the teaching methods used, the second discusses their opinion of the modules' effectiveness in relation to the evaluation criteria. The emphasis, therefore, is upon the trainers' perceptions of the modules' effectiveness in terms of:

- *flexibility* — can a module be developed in different ways so that it is appropriate to different organisations working in different contexts?
  is there scope for involving others beyond the designated 'trainer' in the training process?
  can the module be delivered in different forms?
- *relevance* — can a module be developed to meet the perceived training needs of different groups of workers within the same organisation, or alternatively, workers doing similar jobs in different organisations?
- *critical assessment of practice* — does a module encourage trainers to build in opportunities
  a) to assess their own effectiveness as trainers?
  b) for trainers to assess their own skills and knowledge in 'real' contexts?

We discuss the flexibility of the modules at different levels and their relevance to training needs within the different community education contexts. In addition, we focus on the following aspects of the pilots:

- approaches to developing the module;
- teaching methods suggested by the module and those used by the trainers;

- support networks encouraged by the module;
- time required for preparation and follow-up work;
- effectiveness of the modular approach for training in community education.

Although most of the information contained here was obtained from interviews, it is supplemented where appropriate with data gathered through observation and informal conversations with the trainers.

It is important to stress that the trainers undertaking the pilots were all familiar with Scotvec modules to some extent and saw many advantages in modular training. All of them were acquainted with the terminology used in the descriptors, some had also been involved in the fleshing out process, had delivered modules and used similar assessment procedures to those suggested by the pilot training modules. They were therefore rather different from many of the trainers/employers interviewed in the first phase of the research, who had little or no experience of using modules, and who had not considered modularising existing training.

Approaches to developing the modules

We begin by looking at how the trainers used the descriptor to plan and develop training programmes to meet the needs of different categories of part-time staff; how they fleshed out the modules; and the range of teaching methods they used.

The way in which the trainers approached the modules was largely dependent on whether they had delivered similar courses in the past. Those who had, were working within a familiar context and could adapt their teaching materials and methods to the requirements of the descriptor, as the following comment illustrates:

> *I decided to use the module as a framework for a ... course I was doing anyway to provide a guideline and structure.*

Only the community work induction module was completely new to the trainers and required a slightly different strategy. However, both the organisations which piloted this module had been reconsidering their policy on induction training and took advantage of the opportunity to try out the module. One trainer, working with a fairly homogenous group employed by the same organisation, described her approach to the induction module as a 'marriage process' explaining that she:

> *took the needs of the (employing organisation) and tried to use the module essentially to fulfil these needs. I then took a learning outcome alongside an instrument of assessment and translated that to a set of needs.*

To sum up, training needs identified by the employing organisations suggested the content of the modules while the descriptor defined the goals for the person planning the course. This brings us on to the second stage in the planning process during which the module was fleshed out.

Fleshing Out

As the term 'fleshing out' implies trainers used the descriptor as a skeleton structure around which to design a training programme. In general, this process was found to be time consuming but not difficult. In most cases they were easily able to adapt tried and tested programmes and materials to suit the requirements of the module. The two crucial elements in this process were the learning outcomes and instruments of assessment:

> *I tended to look at what the outcomes were ... then set the module aside and looked at work I had done in the past and areas I had covered and what had worked ... then went back to the learning outcomes and juggled the two.*

Although most of the trainers said they took the learning outcomes as their starting point, two sometimes began with the instruments of assessment and worked their way backwards. The most time consuming aspect was working out the instruments of assessment due, in part, to the trainers' limited experience of this process.

The trainers preparing the community work induction module had the fewest ready-made resources relevant to the course and had to design it from scratch. One of them used some materials from other training courses, while the other prepared fresh ones. They both called on the services of other staff, such as managerial, administrative and personnel staff, who would not normally contribute directly to formal training for part-timers. The latter approach met with mixed success. On the one hand it brought staff together who would rarely meet, encouraging a better understanding of each others' jobs and widening the workers' range of contacts. On the other hand, full-time administrative staff may have little understanding of the realities of the part-timers' situation and are not necessarily trained to be sensitive to their needs. We discuss this further below and in Chapter 3.

Teaching methods

All the trainers said that the modules offered sufficient scope for using a variety of teaching approaches particularly participative methods many of which are suggested by the descriptors. Those they reported using included ice-breakers, brainstorming, case-studies, discussion, peer-group interviews, role-play, simulations, worksheets, visits to other groups or organisations, practical activities, such as games, and lectures. In this way they were able to demonstrate methods that the participants could use in their own work. The limited observation that the researcher was able to undertake confirmed that active participation was encouraged in variety of ways with preference given to large and small group discussion followed by plenary sessions with significant points recorded on a flip chart. Small group discussions were conducted without the tutor, while he or she generally led large group discussions but occasionally deliberately avoided taking a leading role. Table 2.1 provides details of teaching methods used in the particular

sessions observed by the researcher. These are just a sample of the methods used. Table 3.1 provides a better flavour of the full range as reported by the trainees.

Table 2.1: Observed teaching methods

Method	Module Title				
	Group Work	Induction	Induction	Youth Work	Youth Work
Brainstorm	•	•	•	•	
Case-study		•	•		
Discussion: Tutor led	•	•	•	•	•
Small group without tutor	•	•	•	•	
Large group	•	•	•	•	•
Handouts	•	•	•	•	•
Ice-breaker		•	•	•	
Lecture	•	•	•	•	
Negotiation		•		•	
Role-Play				•	
Video				•	
Written Exercise		•	•	•	•

While the descriptors stipulate specific teaching approaches for certain learning outcomes, the trainers said that, in general, they selected methods they felt comfortable with and which had proved effective in the past. Two of the trainers, however, thought that they had played a more dominant role than they would normally and had tended to be more didactic because they felt pressured to provide adequate information, within the limits of class contact time, to enable the trainees to do their assignments.

So far we have been describing how trainers went about preparing and teaching modules, we are now going on to discuss their perceptions of the effectiveness of the modular programme.

Flexibility

As have described above, the modules were not perceived as restrictive with regard to choice of teaching methods. We now focus on the scope they offer for varying the form of the programmes, the content and the target groups.

Form

The variety of forms in which the modules were delivered is indicative of one aspect of their flexibility. Two groups met from one to three hours a week with a break half way through the

course, one group met on two full days within a month, and the other two met on three Sundays over five months. Clearly there are limits to the flexibility that can be built-in to any training programme and restraints were imposed more by the amount of time and resources available for training rather than the requirements of the module itself. However, the pilots do show that modular courses can be designed to meet the resources of the employing organisation. For instance, the induction course trainers said that there would rarely be sufficient numbers of new employees at any one time for such a course to be viable. For this reason, one of the employing organisations, in a rural area, had decided to deliver the course as a distance learning package in the future. This approach raises a number of questions regarding employees' broader needs, particularly those connected with peer group support and opportunities to share experiences and ideas in a group situation. We return to this in Chapter 3.

The majority of the participants were able to meet the attendance requirements and trainers said that they offered remediation to the few individuals who missed training sessions. Special provision was made for two participants with literacy difficulties on two of the pilots, both were given extra tutorial time, one was allowed to tape-record answers to assignments and the other was offered the services of a scribe. Also, as one tutor pointed out, first level modules require very little written work. Creches or reimbursement for childcare expenses were offered to the participants on all but one pilot. Ironically, although respondents in the first phase of the research had placed childcare provision high on their list of needs, none of the participants, several of whom were mothers with young children, made use of the creches or claimed childcare expenses.

Target Groups

Another aspect of flexibility was that target groups also varied on each module, for example, one induction module was delivered to a group of community education assistants and the other was open to both local authority and voluntary sector workers; one youth work module was undertaken by youth workers from a community centre and the other by full-time students specialising in different aspects of community care. The multi-agency training seemed to work as far as the learning objectives were concerned, and offered many benefits to the agencies and trainees, but it was much more demanding in terms of organisation and administrative planning. As mentioned earlier, the second group work pilot was delayed because of problems of co-ordination between the target groups. The multi-agency group work module for women and health tutors ran relatively smoothly, however, because it had been planned well in advance by a long-established committee which also provided administrative backing for the trainer and took on the responsibility for liaising with the many organisations involved.

One problem that the multi-agency and free-lance trainers, mentioned was that of being unfamiliar with the course participants, the realities of their jobs and their training needs. For instance, one trainer had assumed that trainees doing an induction module would be predominantly youth workers and fleshed out her module accordingly. However, the group was more diverse

than expected and the trainer had to improvise during the sessions to ensure that the content was relevant to everyone. Suggested methods for compensating for this included having a pre-course meeting with participants and, perhaps, supervisory staff, or building in extra time into the course to allow space for negotiation.

Negotiation

The modular framework did not prevent the trainers from incorporating some aspects negotiated by the trainees. Project work appeared to be the main area offering scope for negotiation and encouraging a measure of self-assessment. For instance, youth workers studying the range of youth work provision were asked to select an organisation each to research and collectively to formulate a questionnaire to be used for the assignment. In addition all three trainers who incorporated visits or placements in their respective modules said that the sites used were chosen by the students themselves. On other pilots, trainees who were to be assessed at work, were encouraged to identify the skills and qualities necessary for their jobs. These were subsequently included on a checklist for the trainer or others observing them carrying out a practical assignment as an instrument of assessment.

Time was identified as the most inhibiting factor in providing scope for negotiation. Thus trainers delivering a module over a long period and with plenty of class contact time (twenty hours or more) were best able to cater for any expressed training needs. One trainer intending to deliver a module on one afternoon a week over ten weeks, for example, said that she had only planned the first few sessions in order to allow the trainees' needs to shape the rest of the course. Another trainer, with very little class-contact time, said that if she were to deliver the module again she would have a pre-course meeting with the participants in order jointly to develop the course.

The observation indicated that the trainers tried to be sensitive to participants' expressed needs by offering them opportunities to ask for what they wanted whenever possible, most frequently by encouraging them to share their own experiences, problems and concerns in the context of group discussions, but also by programming specific items for negotiation as part of the course. Thus on one pilot trainees were asked what they did and did not want out of a training course at the outset. They were also asked to formulate questions about their working conditions for their employers, rather than being presented with general information about terms and conditions of employment.

As described above the trainers' experience has demonstrated that modules may be delivered in a variety of forms and, with a few reservations, to a range of target groups. This leads us on to the trainers' perceptions of the relevance of modules to the trainees and the employing organisations.

Relevance

In general trainers considered the content of the modules to be relevant and pitched at the right level for inexperienced workers. Some trainers expressed worries about designing courses for mixed ability groups which stretched the capabilities of all the participants without being too easy for some and too difficult for others, but all welcomed the fact that trainees could work to their own level of ability.

Specific criticisms were levelled at some features of the modules. In the youth work module, for example, both the trainers thought that it was not possible to acquire basic counselling skills in the time available and that it would not be appropriate for inexperienced workers to attempt to deal with situations requiring such skills. This view was shared by a guest tutor, a counselling trainer who was not a youth worker. Similarly some of the instruments of assessment and performance criteria were not considered to be appropriate, did not work in practice or required to be more clearly defined in order to reduce ambiguity. Because of the lessons learned from the pilots, all these have been subsequently altered to meet the recommendations of the trainers.

A major concern of employers/trainers in our earlier research had been that national certificate modules would reduce the scope for including issues of immediate concern at a local level and would be of little relevance or benefit to their part-time staff. The pilots would suggest that this fear is unfounded and that it is possible to tailor the module to the needs of participants working in different geographic areas and having different responsibilities. As one trainer pointed out, exploring each other's different experiences and activities is as important as sharing common ones. In fact all the trainers were observed to relate personal experiences to wider issues rather than focusing only on the immediate concerns of the employing organisations.

Group discussions afforded ample opportunities for the participants to compare, contrast and learn about each other's experiences. Sharing a common subject area diminished the necessity of belonging to a narrowly defined locality. For example, one of the more disparate groups, the women and health tutors, included participants working with: ethnic minority groups; women suffering from mental illness; female members in a union; and non-specialist groups, yet the tutor said she had no difficulty in planning a course to meet general and specific needs of all the individuals involved. Students also found the course relevant as we shall see in Chapter 3.

We have shown that the trainers regarded the modules as relevant to the training needs and learning abilities of the trainees and that they offered scope for including local issues and concerns. We now ask whether the modules encouraged local involvement and, if so, whether this led to the identification of sources of support networks for trainers and trainees.

Local involvement and support

We begin by looking at how trainers were supported during the piloting of the modules. Before we discuss the local situation we should say that in this instance all the trainers were supported by the project's development officer who visited each of them before and during the pilot and could be

contacted throughout the project. It was also hoped that the trainers who had met at a pre-pilot seminar would contact each other for support and to share ideas but time and distance discouraged them from doing so. However, they were kept informed about each other's work through the visits of the researcher and development officer. Clearly, this source of support and medium through which trainers could maintain contact would not normally be available.

At a local level, the employing organisations were very involved at all stages of the pilot, but particularly in the development of the module. For example, employers demonstrated their interest by making financial and material resources available, providing administrative back up and either assisting in the design of the course directly or being available if the trainer wished to consult them. In addition, two senior members of staff with a remit for regional training volunteered to deliver some of the training themselves. Local involvement and support could be increased by using training teams comprising the trainer and local full-time workers as was the case with the induction module in the Borders and the youth work module in Forres. This approach had advantages at three levels: it provided mutual support for the trainers; increased the availability of tutor support for the trainees; and augmented the pool of trainers for the employing organisation.

Multi-agency courses increased the scope for local involvement by bringing together workers from a wide range of voluntary and other organisations. The free-lance trainer, for instance, was a member of a multi-agency committee concerned with women's health who were able to support the trainer and offer her the benefit of their varied perspectives on the subject. The group, in its turn was also able to profit from the insights offered by individuals involved in different aspects of women's health, such as issues specific to ethnic minorities or women in the workplace. The postponed group work module was to include workers from voluntary and local government agencies and to be delivered by trainers from three different organisations with the intention of encouraging inter-agency relationships in the neighbourhood.

Further scope for drawing in members of different organisations or departments of the employing organisation, was provided by the use of guest tutors, but it is important to emphasise that these individuals must be well supported by the overall trainer. In most cases the trainers met the guests to discuss what was expected of them and attended their sessions.

All the trainers maximised local involvement through project work to be undertaken at the workplace or in the local community. For example, trainees on both the youth work pilots and one of the induction pilots were asked to visit local organisations which were either involved in a similar field of activity or could provide help and support to the worker or the client group. The full-time students all undertook placements in local community organisations where they were supported by staff who were responsible for assessing their performance. In this way, the trainees were able to establish relationships in areas where they may wish to work and share their experiences and knowledge with each other. The local organisations, in their turn, were able to contribute to the course through consultation with the trainer and to the training of potential employees.

Work-based projects could be used to build relationships between full-time and part-time workers. Our earlier research had revealed that poor communications between full-time and part-time workers was quite a common problem. This led to the part-timers feeling isolated, lacking in direction and anxious about the quality of their work. In order to increase supervisory staff's involvement in training, the trainers on the pilots included projects which required these individuals to observe and comment on practical tasks undertaken by trainees. Thus, trainees on the group work module would be observed conducting a session, or a youth worker might be observed demonstrating contact skills at a youth club. Ideally, the trainee and supervisor would meet to discuss the task, undertake the task and then review and jointly assess what happened.

In some cases, these projects highlighted deficiencies in support systems within organisations ranging from supervisory staff disclaiming responsibility for part-time workers on their team to full-time staff not returning telephone calls or answering queries from participants researching projects. Trainers also said that they tried to foster supportive networks and build friendships among participants through small group work and by keeping the atmosphere as informal as possible. This was borne out by the observation, during which trainers were seen to vary the groups for some tasks to ensure that all the participants got to know each other or, on other occasions, grouped together particular individuals doing very similar jobs.

Critical assessment of practice

There was a consensus about the importance of encouraging part-timers critically to assess their practice and the skills being imparted by the modules. The amount of theory included in any of the modules was dependent on the trainer's assessment of the participants' needs and abilities rather than the guidelines of the descriptor. While they did not explicitly introduce theory to any extent during the sessions that were being observed, the trainers encouraged the trainees to explore the reasons why they used particular skills and the philosophy underpinning their organisations through discussions and assignments. Two tutors also provided handouts summarising some of the theoretical background to the skills being developed.

Trainers singled out practical assignments as the main process for encouraging trainees to develop a critical understanding of working practices in community education. For example, some trainers said they initiated the process by asking participants to identify skills and qualities necessary in particular work contexts, either through brainstorming or small and then large group discussion, which they related to wider issues. Trainees would therefore be expected to carry out their assignment with a basic understanding of the principles by which they were operating. If the course timetable allowed it, trainees would take their experiences back to the group who would discuss, analyse and learn from them in a supportive atmosphere. In this way trainees were able to contribute to the criteria on which their practice was evaluated and develop a theoretical critique that made sense to them. Overall, the trainers were satisfied with this aspect of these modules and the following comment reflects the general impression:

One of (the module's) successes was that we did actually manage to link a theoretical framework to a practice base.

In their turn, trainers were also encouraged critically to assess their own practice and question what they were trying to do and why they were doing it, particularly while planning the courses. Obviously they would have to have a clear understanding of the skills and knowledge they were trying to develop in the trainees, the most effective methods to use and the context in which the training was being developed. In addition, they had to be aware of the implications of introducing modular training as opposed to using other approaches. No doubt their critical awareness was heightened by the fact that this was a pilot and, therefore, the focus of attention of the project team as well as their employers. Thus, each programme was subjected to much more scrutiny and analysis than would normally be the case. Training teams met regularly to review and evaluate the courses and four of the trainers also had debriefing sessions with their employers.

It is interesting to note that the modules appeared to have discouraged the use of one source of criticism, that is, participant evaluation. Only two trainers asked the trainees to fill in evaluation sheets assessing sessions, and only one of these used them at the end of every session, while the others relied on verbal feedback or instruments of assessment to judge whether the trainees had absorbed the training message. Clearly, the latter practice reduces the trainees' opportunities to provide feedback to the trainers about their needs and to influence the development of courses which are intended to be student centred.

Time

All the trainers said that they would expect to spend quite a lot of time preparing training programmes, particularly if they were starting from scratch. In general, they did not think that the pilot modules demanded more time than they would have spent on similar learning outcomes in the past. They were unable to quantify exactly the extra time involved. They, nevertheless said that preparing instruments of assessment and performance criteria and assessing assignments, which are not normal features of community education training, inevitably required more time than other forms of training. One trainer also pointed out that National Certificate modules entailed extra paperwork. On the other hand less time was spent on course design and time was saved by:

having a skeleton structure, rather than a blank sheet of paper and a group in mind.

In addition, as mentioned earlier, trainers said that focusing on the instruments of assessment influenced their planning and this too may have saved time.

Trainers differed on the question of whether the recommended period of 40 hours was sufficient to complete the module. Two felt that some of the learning outcomes merited more time but, in fact, completed the module well within the recommended time. Another thought that half-modules would be more appropriate for part-time workers given their work patterns, other

commitments and degree of motivation. Ideally, they would all have liked more group contact time but were restricted by the time available to them, to the trainees, and the availability of suitable venues. The following comment was echoed by most of them:

> *In terms of contact time we were pushed but that wasn't a constraint of the module.*

Attitude to assessment

In our earlier research some senior staff saw formal assessment as a stumbling block to the introduction of modular training. Assessment in itself was not a problem, but marking was not regarded as compatible with community education ethos and could create opportunities for failure. To some extent, half the trainers in our sample shared this view. For instance, one trainer pointed out that she was accustomed to emphasising the positive aspects and playing down any deficiencies in the skills of the part-time workers whom she supervised, and would therefore find it very difficult to 'fail' them. Partly for this reason several trainers appeared uncomfortable using assessment procedures and did not always clearly inform participants that they were being assessed or emphasise that assignments would be marked. They were also very aware that most of the limited class contact time was spent preparing participants for work that was going to be marked.

On balance, however, the trainers perceived advantages in using assessment procedures diagnostically to ascertain whether or not the trainees had absorbed the training message and because it could provide evidence of attainment of skills. Only the college lecturer was accustomed to using such procedures. The others would normally have relied on trainee evaluation and informal observation to judge whether inservice training had been successful. Nevertheless, they felt that instruments of assessment were more effective in gauging how much the trainees had learned than relying mainly on trainees' evaluative feedback. Because modules use continuous assessment opportunities for failure were minimal, even for people with learning difficulties who, as we have seen, were offered remediation or assistance with written assignments.

Another of their misgivings about assessment procedures arose from the trainers' lack of confidence in the instruments of assessment they had developed and the criteria on which they judged the trainees' performance, because of their own limited experience of using criterion referenced assessment. Clearly, this has implications for the training of trainers as is borne out by the following comment:

> *Marking is probably the most alien aspect to community workers. Community workers are not trained in that - teachers are.*

The trainer added that community education organisations need to spend time deciding on the standards they expected from each module and that they also need to train individuals with a background in community education as moderators to ensure that these standards are uniformly applied throughout the country.

Disadvantages of modular training

Trainers were hard pressed to identify the disadvantages of this form of training. In fact, many of the problems and difficulties they encountered had little to do with the modules themselves but were connected with organisational or administrative failures or timing. Nevertheless, they did express a few concerns about National Certificate modules. One trainer, for example, while appreciating the benefits of being able to learn in 'bite-size chunks' for adult returners with little time to spare for study, was concerned that such an approach may encourage a rather narrow focus rather than the broad understanding of the many facets of community education provided by degree and diploma courses. Looking forward to the possibility of a modular curriculum for community education training, another trainer was worried

..whether people would select the right modules for themselves as part of a package

but hoped that resources would be available for career guidance as part of training provision. Two trainers were concerned about raising part-timers' expectations with regard to job prospects. We discuss this further in Chapter 3.

Finally, several trainers were very concerned about who would deliver the modules. While the community education trainers were not totally opposed to these modules being delivered by further education colleges, they stipulated that trainers should be community education trained and close contacts should be maintained between the college and the field. This was certainly the case with the pilot undertaken by the further education college where the trainer was a trained community worker with five years experience as a youth worker and all the students gained practical experience through placements in community education organisations.

Overall satisfaction

When asked whether National Certificate modules were an effective approach to training the trainers were unanimous in responding affirmatively. The most attractive features of the modular approach identified by the trainers were:

- their flexibility;
- their potential for widening access to training to adult returners;
- the introduction of nationally recognised standards;
- their division into well-defined manageable learning outcomes.

The inherent flexibility of the modules at different levels was emphasised by the trainers, all of whom believed that the modules could be adapted to suit the training needs and personal circumstances of participants as well as the requirements of the employers. This quality, in particular, fulfils an ultimate aim of community education which is to increase access to education and training to all members of the community. As qualifications become more highly valued in the employment market, therefore, it is equally important that training should be validated:

Now that we are looking at graduate entry qualifications ... it is inevitable, particularly for older people coming into the profession who want a professional qualification, that (part-time staff) are going to have to undertake modular training.

The pilots demonstrated the effectiveness of the modules in this sense as the participants included people of different ages, abilities and educational backgrounds few of whom had experienced any form of community education training in the past.

Summary

In this chapter we have described the views of the trainers delivering the pilot modules. Our findings indicate that overall trainers were very satisfied with the modules and regarded them as an effective approach to training. We have shown that they were perceived as flexible in terms of form, content, adaptability to a variety of local contexts and needs of individuals with different educational experiences. They offer scope for a range of teaching methods to be used, can encourage on-the-job support and critical assessment of practice.

Although preparation and follow-up work required a greater time commitment than other forms of training, trainers felt that this was time well-spent. More time may also need to be spent on administrative procedures. On the other hand, having ready-made guidelines on which to base a course can save time. Trainers perceived advantages in using assessment procedures but were concerned about the quality of their assessments.

Looking into the future, concerns were also expressed about how a modular curriculum would work in practice, about trainers without community education experience delivering modules and about who would act as moderators.

It should be remembered that the trainers were all experienced in preparing and delivering modules and were working in a supportive environment, helped by the project's development officer and supported by their own employers. Furthermore, the numbers involved were small and so it would be unwise to generalise from their experience. What we can say about their experience is that none of the fears about the possibly detrimental effect of assessment, or lack of relevance, or theory/practice divide *needs* to arise *because* of modules.

So far we have concentrated on trainers' views of preparing and delivering modules. Did the trainees share the trainers' generally positive view? We discuss this in Chapter 3.

3

Trainees' Views

In reporting the trainees' views on the modules, it is important to point out that they saw the modules from a very different perspective from that of their trainers. The trainees were reacting to a training course, a complete package which included the effectiveness of trainers, guest tutors, teaching methods, content, as well as the suitability of the venue and the timetable. In addition this was the first experience many of them had had of a module or indeed, the first time some had been offered training of any kind. Many, therefore, had only a vague idea of what a module was or how it compared with other forms of training.

Bearing this in mind, we now discuss the trainees' experiences of and attitudes to the pilot modules. In particular we concentrate on their perceptions of the following aspects of the effectiveness of the modules:

- relevance of content and methods;
- support networks encouraged by the module;
- time commitment.

We conclude by discussing trainees' attitudes to assessment and summing up what the trainees had to say about the overall effectiveness of modular training.

As before, our data were obtained from interviews and supplemented by or contrasted with that gathered through observation and informal conversations with the trainees. We begin by briefly describing how the trainees came to do the module and then discuss how relevant the trainees found the teaching methods and content to their needs.

Motivation for undertaking the modules

It will be remembered that data were collected from five groups piloting three different modules:

- an Introduction to working with Groups (group work) undertaken by women and health tutors;
- Community Work Induction (induction) piloted by one regional authority for its own staff and by another for staff from different agencies;
- Youth Work I undertaken by staff in a community centre and by full-time students in a college of further education.

Of course, people attend training courses for a variety of reasons and the reasons which prompted initial attendance may change over time. Our trainees identified the following reasons for doing the pilot modules:

- to gain a qualification which would improve employment prospects. This was particularly prevalent among the full-time students and individuals who were relatively new to community education;
- to update skills and knowledge. The women and health tutors, for example, had applied to do a group work skills course not knowing that they would be offered a module. Experienced youth and community workers viewed the modules as refresher courses;
- to conform to the employer's training policy. One of the participating regional authorities had recently implemented a mandatory training policy, which would include the induction module, and the others are considering doing the same;
- for personal development and pleasure. Some participants who considered little of the content to be relevant to their training needs, nevertheless enjoyed their course and derived benefits from it.

Relevance

A major issue emerging from the previous research was that training had to be seen as directly relevant to the trainees' own area of work. If part-time staff were predominantly involved with youth work with 12 to 14 year olds, for instance, they did not appreciate training sessions on youth work with younger age groups. There were two main aspects of relevance explored with the trainees, teaching methods and content. In essence we wanted to know if the teaching methods used in the modules could be used by part-time staff in their work. We also wanted to know if the module outline was sufficiently flexible to permit the content to be adapted to the different contexts in which part-time staff worked. We begin by describing the teaching methods mentioned by the respondents and then discuss their perceptions of the effectiveness of these methods.

Teaching Methods Used

All the trainees said that a wide variety of teaching methods were used and that the tutors' own input was well balanced by participative activities. All the courses began with some form of ice-breaking exercise, a kind of game with the purpose of introducing the participants to each other and encouraging them to relax. Some trainers used these at the beginning of each session. Within the sessions tutor-talk and discussion were the predominant methods. Trainers rarely spoke for any length of time (ten minutes or more) without interruption but generally initiated some kind of dialogue by inviting questions from the group or asking questions. During the observed sessions this method sometimes encouraged lively discussion while on other occasions the group remained passive. Brainstorming was popular and was used to raise the groups' awareness of all aspects of a particular topic and to stimulate discussion. Participants were frequently asked to split up into groups of three or four to discuss specific topics, solve problems or do group exercises. An example of the first might be jointly to identify qualities required for a particular job. Case-studies

of real problematic situations were used as a focus for problem solving exercises. Group exercises included writing down an action plan for a group outing or steps in planning a learning programme. Trainees were also aware that they were learning from each other by sharing ideas and experiences.

Outside class contact time learning was more self-directed and included written assignments requiring research, such as writing a report on a visit to a youth club, and work-based projects identifying and demonstrating skills required for the job. Trainees who were asked to fill in evaluation sheets after each session identified this as a useful teaching method because it encouraged them to reflect on the session and review what they had learned. Table 3.1 lists the range of teaching methods reported by the respondents.

Table 3.1: Reported teaching methods

Method	Module Title				
	Group Work	Induction	Induction	Youth Work	Youth Work
Brainstorm	•	•	•	•	
Case-Study		•	•		
Discussion:					
Tutor led*	•	•	•	•	•
Small group	•	•	•	•	
Large group**	•	•	•	•	•
Handouts	•	•	•	•	•
Ice-breaker		•	•	•	
Lecture	•	•	•	•	
Negotiation	0	•		•	
Role-Play	•			•	
Video				•	
Visits			•	•	•
Work-based Projects	•	•	•	•	•
Written Exercise	•	•	•	•	•
Used by Trainees in their work	•	0	0	0	0

0 mixed response

* Large group discussion with tutor taking a dominant role
** Large group discussion where tutor does not dominate

Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Teaching Methods

The majority of trainees enjoyed the range and variety of methods modelled by the trainers. They saw possibilities of using them in their own work. For a few, however, such as part-time youth workers involved in sports or those whose work was administrative, the methods were not seen as useful for their own work. Nevertheless, these trainees saw the range of methods used as effective in terms of their own training.

The participants' views on the effectiveness of different teaching methods confirmed our earlier research findings. Respondents in both phases of the project emphasised their preference for learning through active and participative methods rather than passive ones. Fortunately this view was also held by the trainers delivering the modules. Inexperienced workers emphasised how much they gained from learning how their more experienced colleagues approached their work and, whatever the length of experience, all the respondents said that they were stimulated by learning about different approaches or reassured that other people used similar methods to their own. Likewise, sharing problems and difficulties was perceived as reassuring and found to reduce anxieties and feelings of isolation:

> *It's supportive to know that I'm not the only worker who comes across difficult people....It's great to look at different ways of dealing with situations.*

In addition, trainees said that they gained confidence from having their experiences valued by other members of the group and contributing to their colleagues' learning.

Some trainees said that they would rather work in several small groups rather than a single large group which could be inhibiting for shy members. Although most people probably found it easier, and would have had more opportunities to contribute to a discussion in a small group, participants on only one module expressed a marked preference for this. Reasons for their view may be sought in the form the course took and the backgrounds of the participants. They were from different organisations who met once a week in the evening and did not gel very quickly. The contrast is illustrated by the following comment made after the first session:

> *(In the large group) members contributed willingly when asked - but there was very little dialogue between members, only between individual members and the co-ordinator. (In the small group) communication was much more free, though we were clearly still at the getting-to-know-each-other stage.*

Once the group did get to know each other, however, the size of the group became less important and by the third session:

> *There was much more discussion between group members. It felt much more like a group than a class.*

Groups of individuals from the same organisation who already knew each other or who met for a full day were less concerned about the size of the group and, during observed sessions, seemed to contribute freely in large or small groups, although some individuals said little in the large group. However, it would appear that emphasising small group discussion at the beginning of a course could facilitate the gelling of the group and enable the participants to get to know each other much more quickly.

One method, role-play, provoked a mixed reaction although it was used only in two of the groups. For instance, during one of the observed sessions, when a guest tutor asked the group to role-play a simulated situation several participants appeared very uncomfortable and two said they would rather not take part. The tutor had to work hard to allay their apprehension and convince them of its value as a method of learning. Two respondents doing a different module also expressed misgivings about role-play. The latters' concern was not with participating in the activity but with using such a potentially powerful method in what may be an emotionally charged situation for the individuals with whom they work. Therefore, they felt that more time needed to be spent on developing a better understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of the various methods. Other respondents, however, expressed no concern about role-play, some said they enjoyed it and found it stimulating:

> *I like a bit of role-play. It's good to get up and do something instead of sitting down all the time. You have to take risks.*

Those who were unhappy about using this method felt that some time should have been spent on critically evaluating the advantages and disadvantages of different teaching methods in depth and, given the limited class contact time, would have liked suggestions for further reading.

Lectures were not regarded as a good method of getting the training message across. While the trainees said that they were happy to listen to talks about relevant topics, as a prelude to a participative activity for example, they were critical of tutors who spoke at length, or seemed unable to look at issues from the part-timers' perspective, or dismissed their views or concerns or did not attempt to answer their questions with any sensitivity. It must be said, however, that the guest tutors who aroused the most negative criticism were not trained for the task but had been invited to contribute to the module because of their specialist knowledge. For instance, speakers asked to provide input on the learning outcome concerning conditions of service from the induction module were singled out for criticism by both groups of participants. They spoke to the group for about an hour and also fielded questions about the terms of the part-timers' employment. The seminar revealed that there were many issues on employment policy needing clarification and guest speakers would have been hard pressed to provide satisfactory answers to the part-timers' questions.

By contrast, the overall trainers and guest tutors, whose skills were regarded as good, were observed to encourage dialogue, to pause and invite feedback and to be aware of unspoken signals, such as lack of understanding or diminishing interest, from individuals.

As we found in the first phase of the project, on-the-job training opportunities were highly regarded by part-time workers. The trainees appreciated opportunities to practice job skills and to discuss their own competence with a supportive observer. They also recognised the value of work-based projects in the context of developing a deeper understanding of the principles underlying the practice of their respective organisations. Examples of practical projects might

include group work tutors running an actual session while being observed by a supervisor looking for evidence of skills listed on a checklist prepared by the trainer and trainees; or youth workers demonstrating contact skills when welcoming new young people to a group or using games to break down barriers between the young people in a group. In this way, they felt, connections between theory and practice were underlined and their relevance to the workers' own job was made explicit:

> *It's useful to have a base when you are working on (a practical assignment) you are referring to something real.. rather than just thinking about why you do something... you are questioning 'what am I doing, why am I doing it'.*
>
> (Trainee on induction module)

> *I think you learn more when your learning is related to what you are doing. I think your work benefits because of the critical perspective that the learning provides and I think you are aware of your own performance and that the responsibility for learning is on you and it's not a question of cramming in bits of facts and figures. You're actually changing the way you think and the way you approach things rather than taking information on board.*
>
> (Trainee on group work module)

Finally, trainees given evaluation sheets to fill in which asked them to assess the way the group worked, the content and their own performance said that they learnt a great deal from this exercise. Only two groups were given evaluation sheets, the other trainers by contrast, relied on the assignments or verbal evaluation at the end of the session for feedback on their effectiveness. From the comments made by the former groups, it would appear that the formal evaluation encouraged participants to feel more involved in their learning and reflecting on the experience reinforced newly acquired skills and knowledge.

To sum up, our findings suggest:

- trainees appreciate a variety in teaching methods but have a preference for participative methods;
- trainees value learning from each other as much as from the tutor and find it easier to do so in a small rather than a large group until they feel comfortable with each other;
- guest speakers need to be selected with care and to be well-briefed about trainees learning needs and preferences. The presence of the overall trainer during the guest's sessions is also helpful;
- trainers need to be more explicit about why they use particular methods, especially if they are modelling methods to be used by trainees. Role-play, above all, requires to be planned and prepared for;
- trainees value opportunities to practice skills in their workplace and receive constructive criticism from supervisors. They also learn from self-assessment.

Content

The content of the courses was prepared by trainers for specific target groups and, on the whole, the respondents agreed that it met its mark. A few did say that some topics were not relevant to their own situation but they found them interesting nevertheless. The one individual who reported that the content was largely irrelevant to her needs, was employed to produce a community newspaper but was obliged to do the induction module aimed mainly at staff from community centres. The latter, on the other hand, were very satisfied with the way in which the course focused on their needs. Members of a group of youth workers attending a session on counselling delivered by a tutor who had no youth work experience complained that some of the material used was irrelevant to their work. However, other members of the same group, who had an interest in counselling, were able to take a broader view by focusing more on the skills demonstrated rather than the content.

In addition, trainees reported that they were encouraged to contribute towards the content of the course by offering their own experiences as topics for discussion or, more formally, as case-studies for group exercises:

> *A lot of it has relied on asking us about our experiences not... presenting us with a body of information. It was very much building on experiences that we already had.*

Although there were a few complaints about the use of jargon, which was not explained, none of the respondents reported experiencing any difficulty with the content and the majority agreed that it was pitched at the right level for them:

> *There's nothing that I haven't been able to understand. The assignment for example that was relatively straightforward. It wasn't as if it were an impossible task but it did require effort. Things like that are challenging which is what I'm looking for. It's just at the right level.*

One participant, who spoke English as a second language, reported that she found the content difficult to follow at times but added that she nevertheless preferred to undertake the course in English rather than her first language. In addition, she was supported by her supervisor who was also undertaking the course and could therefore clarify anything she did not understand.

Only two respondents said that they found that the modules were too easy and did not stretch them, although they also said that they were satisfied with the courses and identified a number of benefits derived from doing this form of training. Further probing revealed that these individuals had expected the kind of test conditions they had experienced at school and had been surprised to find the assignments and assessments well within their capabilities. Other respondents, while satisfied with the training, said that they would have appreciated guidance on further reading on the topics they had been introduced to and would like to develop further.

Support

One of the underlying intentions of the modules was to encourage the development of different kinds of support networks among part-time workers who frequently work in isolation. Part of the agenda of many training courses, including these modules, is to encourage participants to build supportive relationships with each other, as well as to identify sources of support within their own organisations and outside agencies. To this end, two of the modules include strategies for identifying sources of support and developing supportive relationships. The majority of participants in our sample appear to have been well-supported during their training and in their work.

All the trainers were contactable if necessary during the courses. Work-based projects necessitated the assistance of full-time staff who would act as observers or answer questions about organisational structure and policy. The induction module was particularly helpful in this context as the performance criteria required the formation of a support network and the demonstration of methods appropriate to an aspect of the participant's job which would be observed by supervisory staff. The trainers instructed the trainees to solicit the help of their supervisors to carry out their assignments and to interview them about their perceptions of their own and the trainees' roles within the organisations. Full-time staff responsible for the community education assistants had been briefed as to what would be required of them. These assignments clarified many issues concerning support for the trainees and also, indirectly, for the organisation. For instance, supervisors were forced to re-examine their relationship with part-time staff, and to define, justify, or perhaps reassess, the responsibilities of their jobs and how they might develop. This does not mean that such a process was not part of many supervisory staff's normal practice, but that it served as a consciousness raising exercise in cases where part-timers had been unable to communicate their needs or expectations and had felt taken for granted. The debriefing session which followed this assignment indicated that, whether or not the part-timers enjoyed good working relationships with their supervisors, having time set aside to focus on these aspects of their job gave them a clearer idea of their role within and contribution to the organisation and enhanced their job satisfaction. In some cases considerable improvements in relationships were reported, while in a tiny minority problems were identified for managerial staff to deal with.

Some students on the multi-agency induction course experienced communication problems of a different kind when trying to carry out an assignment. Asked to arrange visits to local authority organisations themselves, trainees in one area found it impossible to get in touch with appropriate contacts simply because telephone calls were not put through, messages were not passed on and calls were not returned. Not surprisingly, the respondents who suffered this experience reported feeling frustrated and undermined by it but succeeded in carrying out their assignment with the help of personal contacts as opposed to going through the official channels.

Both groups of trainees doing the youth work module said that they were well supported by supervisory staff. At the community centre, for instance, all three full-time community workers

attended the training sessions, offered support sessions and acted as observers for the practical assignments. The college students had regular tutorials with their trainer and those interviewed reported having regular support meetings with individual members of staff or attending team meetings when on placement.

Support for participants doing the group work module varied from agency to agency, although most of the interviewees said that they were well supported by their employers or that they could get support if they needed it. In one case it was not possible to identify an appropriate person to observe the practical exercise within the employing organisation but the trainer was able to fulfil this role. During one of the observed sessions, two full-time workers revealed that they were very poorly supported in their workplace and said how the course had provided an invaluable form of support, not only through developing and boosting confidence in their knowledge and skills,but also through learning in a supportive setting with colleagues.

Most, though not all, respondents felt that participants were mutually supportive. Some groups also took longer to gel than others. Reasons for this appeared to depend on how much the group had in common and on the length of the course and sessions:

> *There's one drawback of it being short which is that you don't have the opportunity to build up as much of a relationship with the other people during the course as you do over a longer period.*

For example, respondents from the group work course attending evening sessions once a week felt that the group took a long time to gel partly because the sessions were quite intense with a very short break in the middle leaving very little time for building informal relationships. However, as the course progressed they grew closer and several said that they intended to keep in touch with each other for mutual support and to share ideas and information The full-time students too, said that they had not gelled as a group, although they found the other participants helpful and friendly in the class. The in-house training groups were the most cohesive, perhaps because they had so much in common and included members who were already good friends. In addition, they spent full days together which included several breaks during which they could relax together and chat informally.

The youth workers employed in the same centre were particularly close although half of them had been employed only a few months before the course started and were only slightly acquainted with their colleagues. Time spent together on the course provided an opportunity for them to get to know each other and develop a team identity, even though several only spent a few hours a week at the centre. The extent of the support they offered each other was exemplified in an observed session by the way in which they worked together to assist a colleague with literacy difficulties without revealing the problem to the guest tutor. The more confident participants pretended to have difficulties in completing written tasks and asked for more time or asked for

words to be spelt out. Although the above group may have been the most supportive, all the observed sessions indicated that participants were very willing to offer the benefits of their experience to their colleagues once a comfortable, supportive atmosphere was established and several interviewees mentioned that they had contacted other participants outside class contact hours.

Clearly, such relationships would not develop so easily if the courses were done by distance learning. Ironically, the part-timers in the organisation planning to deliver the induction course by distance learning, most appreciated meeting as a group and strongly expressed a wish to do so on a regular basis. However, limited financial resources would not permit their meeting regularly as a group in worktime and they would have to organise informal gatherings themselves outside working hours.

Time

The time commitment demanded by the modules did not appear to constitute a particular problem for the majority of the trainees, although few found it difficult to attend some of the sessions because of personal circumstances. As we mentioned above funds provided for childcare were not taken advantage of as other members of the family were available to care for the children in the home. The only organisation not to offer childcare facilities delivered the module in worktime and the trainer made sure that the session ended punctually. Preparation and follow-up work did not encroach much into the participants spare time and fears about inflexibility in this form of training were not realised. As one respondent who had not expected to be doing a module commented:

> *I was slightly concerned that (because it was a module)... it perhaps meant that it was less flexible and had to be tightly structured... but that was not the case.*

Few of the respondents spent more than a couple of hours per week on course work and many were able to do assignments during work time. Those that said that they spent more than four hours a week on course work said that they did so out of interest rather than because they had to. Of course, those with special learning needs did have to spend extra time on written assignments. In general, as the following comment indicates, work-based assignments could have a dual purpose:

> *I knew it was so closely related to work anyway. I wasn't doing anything over and above my work.*

Trainees on courses that comprised three or four meetings over a period of about five months did express concerns about continuity, maintaining momentum, and being able to remember what they had learned. In fact, several respondents on the courses in question had difficulties in recalling earlier sessions. However, those who had spent time on assignments in the interim found that their learning had been reinforced through practice. Tiredness was mentioned as a drawback of

undertaking the group work course in the evening particularly as some of the participants were full-time workers. It was rather interesting that when asked by the trainer, most of the participants expressed a strong preference for doing a follow-up course over a weekend. Although courses concentrated over a weekend were preferred in some respects, respondents also stressed the value of having time to reflect on what they had learned between sessions.

Assessment

A primary concern of the research was to discover perceptions of the impact of formal assessment on trainees' learning and performance. Many trainers and employers interviewed in the first phase of the research considered formal assessment to be incompatible with community education ethos. Their main worry concerned the creation of opportunities for failure, but also included worries about how standards would be set and whether they would be suitable for their staff. Formal assessment, of course, was the main distinguishing feature between the training modules and traditional in-service training.

A variety of instruments of assessment were used in accordance with the requirements of the module descriptors. Examples of these are included in the development officer's resource pack but brief descriptions of some of them are provided below:

- **assignment:** trainees asked to set up a support network had to produce a written outline of key contacts and their planned strategies for sustaining a network.
- **restricted responses:** trainees were asked to complete statements or fill in blanks. For example, those undertaking the induction module were asked to complete blanks in statements connected with legal requirements, responsibilities and other aspects of their jobs.
- **extended responses:** these might include project reports on the employing organisation or other agencies and structured by a pro forma or questionnaire.
- **log book:** this format was used to report on work experience and included pro formas filled in at the end of every work-based session by the trainee and the supervisor.
- **practical exercise:** to assess a trainee's ability to plan and run session for a specific group he or she would meet the supervisor to preview and review a practical demonstration. The supervisor would observe the session during which the trainee had to demonstrate competence in the skills on a checklist covering aspects such as timing, group size, setting, use of teaching materials and resources, anticipating difficulties, appropriate methods and structure for the group.

Few of the interviewees were able to comment fully on the instruments of assessment they had completed as many had not received any feedback from their trainers at the time of the interview.

While several said that the assignments had been relatively straightforward if challenging, a few said that they did not always clearly understand what was expected of them. In addition, even those who had found the assessments relatively easy were quite anxious about their performance and would have preferred assignments to be returned quickly. The most satisfied in this respect were the college students whose work was assessed and returned within a week and a certain amount of self-assessment was encouraged during tutorials. In other cases trainees were unaware that their work was being formally assessed and were therefore, not worried about it. However, those who were relatively clear about the assessment procedures identified continuous assessment as a preferred feature of modular training. Only one respondent had mixed feelings about the assessment method:

> *Continual assessment suits me better. So I like it. But sometimes I think a wee test would do the trick.*

This was very much a minority view, most of the respondents found assignments instructive and challenging in terms of analysing their practice themselves and being critically assessed while carrying out practical tasks at work by experienced workers. Practical projects in particular were not viewed as tests, to be passed or failed, but as a part of the process of professional development from which the trainee could benefit, as highlighted by the comment below:

> *Being aware of areas where I could definitely improve. How I go about things and also being aware of the way I operate as a participant in a group. It has given me more insight into the way I am which is also helpful.*

Overview of modular training

Before we sum up the trainees' views on the pilot modules, we must point out that we have no independent measures of the effectiveness of the modules or not. The award of the certificate is dependent on whether the modules are accepted by the validating body which had not yet endorsed the instruments of assessment at the time of writing this report. In addition, as we mentioned earlier, the trainees' comments mainly referred to the modular courses they had experienced rather than modular training in general.

We begin by highlighting the positive features of these training courses identified by our respondents. In particular they appreciated:

- the range of teaching methods used with a marked preference for participative methods;
- courses relevant to their perceived needs;
- opportunities to practice the skills they needed for their jobs while being observed by a supportive assessor;
- opportunities to meet other part-timers working in similar fields with whom they could share problems, ideas and experiences.

Many trainees said that the modules had met or exceeded their expectations. They described their gains both in terms of personal and career development. Not only did many say that they had acquired new skills or developed existing ones, but they had become more self-aware and confident in their jobs, a few also added that these changes carried over into their private lives. Finally, nearly all of them stressed that they had enjoyed the experience. Of course the aspects they appreciated are not unique to modules and are features that contribute to success of other forms of training. However, their perceptions clearly demonstrate that many of the worries expressed in the earlier research about the lack of relevance and inflexibility of modules, for example, were unfounded.

Few disadvantages of modular training were identified and little dissatisfaction about the courses was expressed. As we have touched on most of these aspects above we briefly summarise the drawbacks and problems mentioned by our respondents. These include:

- ***lack of challenge:*** this was very much a minority view but has implications for trainers who may be over-anxious about trainees' fears of failure or who are preparing courses for groups with a range of educational and training experience.
- ***irrelevance:*** particular learning outcomes and instruments of assessment may prove inappropriate. For example, the pilot revealed that a learning outcome intended to develop counselling skills was inappropriate to youth workers with limited experience and impossible to deliver in the time available. Likewise an instrument of assessment, a matching exercise from the group work module, produced ambiguous responses. The module developer subsequently altered these aspects and made other improvements suggested by those piloting the modules.
- ***duplication:*** although this was not a problem with any of the pilot modules, the full-time students, who were combining a number of related modules, pointed out that some topics were repeated over their two year course. We should emphasise that provision is made to avoid this occurring: proof of successful completion of a learning outcome can be accepted as part of another module with the same outcome.
- ***venue:*** the importance of the setting within which training takes place should not be underestimated and discomfort can adversely effect training sessions. For example, during observed sessions, one group had to move from a warm comfortable room furnished with soft chairs to another which was cold and less comfortable; another venue was noisy. Respondents from both these groups complained that these factors had effected their concentration and reduced their enjoyment of the session.

Returning to the wider implications of modular training, part-time staff welcomed the possibility of the introduction of appropriate training modules which they could undertake when necessary and convenient. The perceived advantages of modular training included:

- increasing access to training;
- gaining a qualification that has the potential of national recognition;
- adaptability to learning needs;
- continuous assessment;
- opportunities for remediation;
- range of teaching methods.

The following quotes neatly illustrate the above points:

> *I do like the idea particularly... for someone who has family commitments... To build up to do a range of training by modules of this sort has immense possibilities because it's so flexible and because it could be geared precisely to what they're doing.*

> *You can work at your own pace. You can get help, you're not left on your own.*

As we mentioned above, we do not claim that these features are unique to modular training. However, concerns were expressed about the status of part-time modular training and the value of National Certificates in the employment market. Trainees, particularly the full-time students, were uncertain about where the training would lead in terms of career development and felt that career guidance should be included in a modular curriculum and that employers should have explicit career structures with clear signposts offering guidelines to facilitate career planning.

Although our sample was relatively small, our findings suggest that a modular curriculum could complement or offer a viable alternative to current training provision for part-time community education workers. However, if it is to be perceived as worthwhile, training issues such as long-term goals and career development have to be addressed.

4

Key Points for Training Providers

In conclusion we highlight key issues that we believe should be taken into account by employers and trainers if National Certificate modules are increasingly to be used to provide training for part-time workers in community education. Finally, we sum up the lessons learned from the experiences of the participants piloting the training modules. We begin by identifying issues of importance to trainers and end with points that policy makers should consider.

Trainers

- Planning modules need not take longer than planning other comparable programmes. Existing materials can be adapted to requirements of module descriptors.

- Additional time may be required to prepare performance criteria and instruments of assessment. Once prepared, they provide an easily adaptable framework for subsequent groups of trainees.

- Modules may be delivered to multi-agency groups. These programmes need more planning and negotiation than in-house training. Once the groundwork was done, it could provide the basis for further multi-agency training.

- Modules may be delivered in a variety of forms. Each of these has its own strengths and weaknesses. Groups meeting for a few hours a week may take longer to gel than those meeting for a full day or over a weekend. On the other hand, intervals between meetings provide opportunities for reflection which may be shared in group discussion.

- If the overall trainer is not acquainted with the trainees, it is helpful to have a pre-course meeting, or to build in extra time, to discuss training needs, negotiate content, facilitate group cohesion and begin to know the group.

- Modules offer scope for including contributions from guest tutors. Guests should be well-briefed and have a clear understanding of what is expected of them and, if possible, trainers should be present during the session.

- Trainees must have support back at their work-base. Full-time staff at the work-base must be well-briefed about what is required of them.

- These modules encourage the development of support networks either directly as assignments or through meeting other part-timers with similar concerns and interests.

- Trainees prefer participative methods and a variety in teaching approaches, such as group discussion, brainstorming and practical projects.

- Role-play needs to be introduced sensitively and the rationale for it needs to be explicit. Some trainees have to be encouraged to participate. Debriefing is essential.

- Trainers should not be unduly concerned about using assessment procedures. Trainees like assessment which provides a record of achievement and includes opportunities for remediation. Continuous assessment reduces opportunities for failure.

- Assignments must be returned quickly. Having to wait a long time can encourage anxiety and risk reducing the effectiveness of the training message.

- Participant evaluation and self-assessment can help trainees to become more critically aware of their practice.

- Trainers can benefit from participant evaluation of training programmes. Relying only on assessments of student performance to gauge the effectiveness of the training is limiting.

Policy Makers

- Training needs of those delivering the modules must be catered for. They have needs in fleshing out modules, developing performance criteria, instruments of assessment and evaluation.

- Further education lecturers, although experienced in the process of delivering modules, may lack recent community education experience. There would be benefits in combining complementary skills of FE staff and community

education trainers. Mechanisms for bringing the two groups of trainers together should be explored.

- Regional authorities need to clarify their policy on the provision and implementation of systemised and standardised training. If they wish to adopt National Certificate modules they should be clear about the status of these modules in relation to other forms of formal training.

- Guidance on the kind of training that is appropriate and on which modules to undertake, is required by part-time staff or other individuals who may be seeking access to a career in community education.

- Regional authorities should also carefully consider the implications of introducing blanket training without reference to the training needs of their workers. This runs the risk of being perceived as irrelevant by some workers.

- A blanket approach to training may increase access to training provision but risks reducing choice and access. Members of the community who may lack confidence in their learning abilities may be discouraged from becoming involved in community education if they have to undertake a formally assessed course.

- The issue of accreditation of previous training and experience needs to be addressed. Trainees should not find themselves going over old ground or having to do courses which are too easy and irrelevant to them. Likewise, procedures for linking modules should take into account that the same learning outcomes are occasionally repeated in different modules.

- Moderators and subject assessors with community education experience are required to oversee the development of nationally recognised standards of assessment.

Conclusion

Finally, we draw together the views of both groups of respondents on the most significant issues addressed by this evaluation. We must emphasise that the context within which the pilots took place was quite unusual in that more sources of support were available than would normally be the case. Nevertheless, although everyone involved was very committed to the success of the project

the experience demonstrated this approach need not have the adverse effects that some individuals feared as described in our earlier reports. Briefly their doubts concerned:

- flexibility;
- relevance;
- appropriateness for community education ethos;
- contact between full-time and part-time staff.

Flexibility

The modular approach was perceived to be flexible in terms of form, content and training provision. The pilot modules were successfully delivered in different forms, each of which had its own advantages and disadvantages. Distance learning has also been considered by one organisation but was not favoured by trainees who stressed the benefits of learning in a group.

In most cases, trainers were able to tailor the content of the modular programme to the specific training needs of each target group. It was more difficult to tailor the content to the interests of groups comprising mixed categories of workers and a few respondents found some aspects irrelevant to their needs but others enjoyed the variety.

Relevance

In general, both the trainers and trainees found the modules to be relevant in terms of encouraging the use of appropriate teaching methods and the development of local support networks.

Delivering the modules in colleges of further education does not necessarily lead to loss of contact between full-time and part-time staff or reduce local relevance as feared by respondents in the earlier research. To avoid loss of contact close co-operation between colleges and community education organisations is required. In our case-study, one module was delivered in a college of further education by a lecturer with community education experience and students gained work experience through placements in local community education organisations.

Assessment

Worries that assessment procedures would not be compatible with community education ethos because they may create opportunities for failure were not realised. On the contrary, trainees said that assignments were challenging and successful completion boosted their confidence. A minority complained that the courses were too easy.

Trainers lacked confidence in some of the instruments of assessment that they had developed because of their own limited experience in this field. However, they were satisfied that the programmes successfully developed the skills and knowledge laid down by the learning outcomes.

Finally, we conclude with a brief comment on the issue of accreditation. The possibility that modules may be used to build a cumulative record of credits which may provide access to a

higher qualification was very attractive to part-time workers, many of whom would not be able to undertake a full-time course of study or lacked the formal qualifications required by higher education establishments. There is still a long way to go before this hope can become a reality and care must be taken not to raise expectations that will not be fulfilled. Nevertheless, modules can improve job prospects because they give employers a clear idea of the skills and competencies achieved by trainees. In addition, employers should be able to identify training needs and select modules to meet these needs; thus facilitating strategic planning and contributing to employees' career development. Whether modular training *is* the way ahead for part-time community education staff is a question to be settled by policy makers. Our evaluation of three pilot modules suggests that trainers and trainees find modules an effective and appropriate approach to meeting training needs.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PART-TIMERS

Job Title: Organisation: Length of Service:

Module: Form: Timetable:

Previous Training Experience:

Could you briefly tell me how you came to do the module?

Teaching methods

1. Could you describe the way in which the module was presented?
2. What were the teaching methods used?
3. Would you use similar methods in your work?
4. Did you do any practical activities? (If so, what were they?)
5. Were you given the opportunity to contribute to the course? How?
6. Were you given the opportunity to share your concerns and problems? How? Was it worthwhile doing this?

On-the-job support

1. Did you receive any support during the training? From whom?
2. In what way were you supported?
3. Did participants support one another?
4. Were you encouraged to keep in contact after the course?
5. Do you see any advantage to keeping in touch?

Flexibility

1. Was the timing of the training convenient for you?
2. Did the module fit into your normal routine?
3. If no - was any action taken? What kind of action?

Time involved in preparation and follow-up work

1. How much time did you have to spend in preparation and follow-up work?
2. Did this form of training take more time than others you have experienced? In what way?
3. If extra time was required - did you feel that it was worth it?

Local involvement

1. Where did the training take place and by whom was it planned?
2. Were local issues and conditions raised during the course?
3. In what way?
4. Was this relevant to your situation?

Practice/Theory

1. Was any theory included in the training?
2. Did you feel it was relevant/too much/too little?
3. Was it linked in any way to practical aspects of your job?

Reactions to module

1. Can you remember your immediate reactions to the module?
2. Do you remember what you expected from it before you started?
3. Did it come up to your expectations?
4. Were you clearly told what was expected of you at the outset?
5. Were you kept informed about your progress? How often?
6. What did you think generally about the assessment?

Content

1. What did you think of the content?
2. Was it relevant to any aspect of your work?
3. Did you find the content easy or difficult?
4. What did you think of the teaching materials?

Satisfaction

1. How would you describe the training in terms of:
   a) Enjoyment
   b) Understanding your job
   c) Relieving anxiety
   d) Acquiring new skills/knowledge
   e) Improving your performance
   f) Gaining confidence
   g) Applicability to your job?
2. What did you think of the modular approach to training?
3. What were its best aspects?

4. What were its worst aspects?

5. If given the chance how would you improve it?

6. Has it helped you in your work or changed the way you do things?

7. Has it helped you outside work?

Any other comments:

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR TRAINERS

Job Title: Organisation:

Areas of responsibility: Length of service:

Module:

1. Had you had any previous experience of modules?
2. Can you tell me how you decided to approach the module?
3. Can you tell me how you fleshed out the module?
4. Was this quite straightforward/difficult/time-consuming?
5. Were resources easy/difficult to come by?
6. Did you receive any support/guidance in preparing the course?

Teaching methods

1. Tell me about the teaching methods you used
2. Why did you choose these particular methods?
3. Did you feel that you were given sufficient scope to choose from a variety of methods?
4. Were practical activities included? (What were they?)
5. Did you feel the module encouraged you to use these particular activities?
6. Did you monitor the trainees progress? How?
7. Did the trainees make any contribution to the development of the course?
   In what way?

On-the-job support

1. Was any support offered to trainees during the training? (From whom?)
2. Did participants support one another?
3. Were they encouraged to identify other sources of support?
4. Were you/they satisfied with the amount of support provided?

Flexibility

1. Did you find the module flexible or inflexible?
   In what way?
2. What form did the course take?
3. Was there any flexibility built-in?
4. Were trainees able to meet the requirements or were special arrangements made?
   (What were they?)

Time

1. Was the time allocated sufficient to complete the module or did you think it was too much or too little?
2. Did this approach require more time than other forms of training you have undertaken?

   If yes - which particular aspect took the most time?

   If no - how did you save time?
3. If extra time was required, did you feel it was worth it?

Local relevance

1. Were all the participants from the same area and involved in similar work?
2. Did you find there was scope to include issues of common concern to all participants?
3. Were local issues and conditions taken account of? (In what way?)

Practice/Theory

1. Did you feel there was sufficient scope for encouraging participants to assess their practice critically?
2. Is this something that is important to you?
3. Did you include any aspects of the theoretical background to the particular skills being developed by the module?

   If yes - in what way? If no - why?

Relevance

1. Was the module at the right level for your trainees?
2. Do you feel that the main aspects of the participants' work were covered?
3. Did you think the learning outcomes were appropriate?
4. Were the performance criteria appropriate? and the instruments of assessment?
5. Did you think the instruments of assessment adequately assessed the qualities you wanted to assess?
6. Would you have preferred to use different assessment procedures?
7. Did you find that the assessment procedures influenced your teaching? How?
8. Did you have any standards in mind that you expected trainees to achieve?
9. What are your views on the quality of your assessments?

Satisfaction

1. How satisfied are you with the module?
2. With the benefit of hindsight is there anything you would have done differently?
3. If given the opportunity is there anything you would add or take away from the module?
4. How does it compare with other forms of training you have undertaken?
5. What criteria do you normally use to determine whether training is effective?

6. Do you feel that this module met your criteria?

7. Do you think the modular approach is appropriate for community education?

8. What in your view are the advantages/disadvantages of this approach?

Any other comments?